

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Overview

On April 6, 2006, the Examiner issued an Office Action in which claims 1-31, 34 and 36-38 were allowed, and claims 32, 33, 40, 41, 43 and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 39 and 46-49 had previously been withdrawn, and claims 43 and 45 had been canceled.

In response to the Office Action of April 6, 2006, Applicants filed an Amendment and Reply on August 3, 2006 in which claims 32, 33, 40, 50 and 51 were amended, and claims 43 and 45 were canceled. Additionally, applicants presented new claims 53 and 54.

On October 23, 2006, the Examiner issued an Office Action in response to Applicants' amendment of August 3, 2006. The Examiner noted that new claims 53 and 54 were added without identifying that the claims are readable on the elected species. Applicants are appreciative of the Examiner's grant of a one-month shortened statutory period within which this defect could be addressed.

Claims 1-34, 36-38, 40-42 and 46-54 remain for consideration in this application, as they were presented in Applicants' Amendment of August 3, 2006.

New Claims 53 and 54

Claims 53-54 are readable on the elected species Group II, as consolidated with species Group I by the Examiner's withdrawal of the restriction between those groups in the Office Action dated February 4, 2004. Applicants submit that new claims 53-54 are properly presented in this application and define allowable subject matter over the art of record.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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